



Salton Sea Authority Board of Directors Meeting

Thursday, May 21, 2015
10:00 a.m.

Imperial Irrigation District
Bill Condit Auditorium
1285 Broadway Avenue
El Centro, CA 92243
(760) 482-9618



AGENDA: **BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**
DATE: **Thursday, May 21, 2015**
10:00 a.m.
LOCATION: **Imperial Irrigation District**
Bill Condit Auditorium
1285 Broadway Avenue
El Centro, CA 92243
(760) 482-9618

I. CALL TO ORDER

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

BOARD ATTENDEES BY TELECONFERENCE

(none)

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Any member of the public may address and ask questions of the Board relating to any matter within the Authority's jurisdiction. This time is reserved for matters not already on the Agenda. Remarks shall be limited to a maximum of three (3) minutes unless additional time is authorized by the Board.

III. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

This is the time set aside for any Board Member to ask questions or address any issue posed by a member of the public.

IV. CONSENT CALENDAR – Approve, Receive, and File

- A. Minutes of April 23, 2015 (*see attached*)
- B. Warrant Register Ratification for: 4/01/2015 – 4/30/2015 (*see attached*)
- C. Internal Financial Report for: 7/01/2014 – 4/30/2015 (*see attached*)
- D. Fiscal Year 2014/2015 Administrative Budget Transfers for Board's Approval (*see attached*)

V. REPORTS

- A. General Manager's Report on Activities (Roger Shintaku)
- B. Update on Activities: Funding and Feasibility Action Plan Report (Roger Shintaku and Tetra Tech)
- C. Legislative Update (Phil Rosentrater) (*See attached*)
- D. Legal Counsel Report, Comments (Bob Hargreaves)

- E. Little Hoover Commission Public Hearing Report (Bob Hargreaves) (*See attached*)
 - 1. Upcoming Little Hoover Commission Public Hearing June 25, 2015
- F. Infrastructure Finance District (IFD) Update (Brian Nestande)
- G. Salton Sea Action Committee (SSAC) (Juan DeLara/Paul Quill)

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Approve Phil Rosentrater, Deputy General Manager, as an authorized signatory, and approve proposed Resolution No. 15-03, entitled, “Resolution of the Board of Directors of the Salton Sea Authority Designating Officials Authorized to Sign Warrants and Checks, Transfer Funds, and Access Safe Deposit Box” (*See attached*)

VII. AD HOC BOARD COMMITTEES REPORTS

- A. Finance (Patrick O’Dowd, Chairman)
 - 1. Approval of Salton Sea Authority Budgets for Fiscal Year 2015-16 (*See attached*)
 - 2. Review of Salton Sea Authority Insurance Coverage
- B. Project (Director Benoit, Chairman)
- C. Personnel (Director Benoit, Chairman)

VIII. INFORMATION OF INTEREST

- A. Little Hoover Commission Tour (*See attached*)

IX. ADJOURNMENT

NEXT MEETING TIME & LOCATION:

Thursday, June 25, 2015
10:00 a.m.

Coachella Valley Water District
Steve Robbins Administration Building
75515 Hovley Lane East
Palm Desert, CA 92260
(760) 398-2651

Any public record, relating to an open session agenda item, that is distributed within 72 hours prior to the meeting is available for public inspection in the lobby at the front desk of the Work Force Development center located at 44-199 Monroe Street, Indio, CA 92201.



OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS

SALTON SEA AUTHORITY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

April 23, 2015

I. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Salton Sea Authority (Authority) Board of Directors (Board) was called to order by Director Benoit, President, at 10:00 a.m., April 23, 2015, at the Coachella Valley Water District, Steve Robbins Administration Building, 75515 Hovley Lane East, Palm Desert, CA 92260, (760) 398-2651.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Director Renison led the Pledge of Allegiance

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

John J. Benoit, President
Ryan E. Kelley, Vice President
Matt Dessert, Secretary
G. Patrick O’Dowd, Treasurer
Cástulo R. Estrada, Director
James C. Hanks, Director
John Renison, Director

AGENCY

Riverside County
Imperial County
Imperial Irrigation District
Coachella Valley Water District
Coachella Valley Water District
Imperial Irrigation District
Imperial County

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Marion Ashley, Director
Frank Durgin, Director
Thomas Tortez, Director

AGENCY

Riverside County
Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla
Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla

BOARD MEMBERS PARTICIPATING VIA TELECONFERENCE

None

AGENCY

SALTON SEA AUTHORITY STAFF PRESENT

Roger Shintaku, General Manager
Bob Hargreaves, Legal Counsel
J. Andrew Schlange, Consultant
Gloria Sampson, Accountant Consultant
Bill Brownlie, Tetra Tech, Consultant
Linda Seroy, Administrative Assistant, Recording Secretary

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Phil Rosentrater
Bruce Wilcox
Nathan White
Linda Beal
Ed Schiller
Darren Simon
Pat Cooper
Paul Quill
Gloria Sampson
Vickie Doyle
Tom Sephton
Jim Kainz
Jennifer Henke

AGENCY

Deputy Director, Riv. Co. EDA
Imperial Irrigation District
Agess, Inc.
Salton Sea History Museum
ILC, Inc.
SDCWA
Office of Supervisor John J. Benoit
Salton Sea Action Committee
Gloria J. Sampson Accounting
Imperial Irrigation District
Sephton Water Technologies
Bermuda Dunes Strategic Planning, Inc.
Coachella Valley Mosquito and Vector
Control District

CALL-IN PARTICIPANTS

Vivien Maisonneuve
Kent Nelson
Laura Peters

AGENCY

DWR
DWR
DWR

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS: Linda Beal and Nathan White of Agess, Inc.

III. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS: None

IV. CONSENT CALENDAR

- A. Minutes of March 26, 2015
- B. Warrant Register Ratification for: 03/01/2015 – 03/31/2015
- C. Internal Financial Report for: 07/01/2014 – 03/31/2015

Salton Sea Authority Staff submitted Minutes, Warrant Register, and Internal Financial Report for the Board’s information, review, and approval.

Director Renison moved that the Consent Calendar be approved. Director Kelley seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

V. AUDIT REPORT FOR THE 2013-2014 FISCAL YEAR

Gloria Sampson, accounting services contract provider for the Salton Sea Authority, introduced Ken Al-Iman, the Mayer Hoffman McCann partner in charge of this year’s audit, who presented the results of Salton Sea Authority’s annual financial statement audit.

VI. REPORTS

- A. General Manager Roger Shintaku presented a report on activities.
- B. Roger Shintaku introduced Bill Brownlie, of Tetra Tech, who gave an update on Funding and Feasibility Action Plan activities, followed by a question-and-answer period in which he answered Board members' questions.
- C. Phil Rosentrater presented a legislative update.
- D. Bob Hargreave gave a report on Legal Counsel activities.
- E. Bruce Wilcox, of IID, spoke on IID projects around the Sea and how the Salton Sea Renewable Energy initiative ties in with the Salton Sea Restoration Plan.

Director Benoit, Ad Hoc Project Committee Chairman, took this opportunity to present the video about Geotubes, as it related directly to Mr. Wilcox's report.

- F. Juan DeLara and Paul Quill reported on Salton Sea Action Committee activities.

VII. CURRENT BUSINESS

A. Water Resources Institute Contracts

At the March 26 Salton Sea Authority Board of Directors meeting, staff presented a "Salton Sea Authority Professional Services Agreement Pursuant to Task Orders" between the Authority and University Enterprises Corporation (UEC) at California State University San Bernardino (CSUSB), and an "Agreement for Transfer of Assets between Salton Sea Authority and California State University San Bernardino" to the Authority's Board of Directors for review and approval. In order to accommodate two Directors who needed to leave early, and there being urgent matters to cover before adjournment, approval of these contracts was tabled until the April 23, 2015, Salton Sea Authority Board of Directors Meeting.

*After discussion of the beneficial work these contracts cover, Director Kelley **moved** that the California State University San Bernardino Water Resources Institute and University Enterprises Corporation contracts be approved. **Seconded by Director Renison. Motion carried unanimously.***

VIII. AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Director Benoit reported that the **Finance Committee** did not yet have anything to report.
- B. Director Benoit, **Project Committee** Chairman, presented the Geotube video (earlier) and answered questions about a recent committee meeting.
- C. Director Benoit, **Personnel Committee** Chairman, deferred the committee's report until after the closed session.

IX. INFORMATION OF INTEREST

- A. The letter regarding the Governor's Renewables Policy was part of the agenda packet. Director Dessert requested that, at the upcoming Little Hoover Commission hearing, where there are links in section D of the letter, the actual legislation in be cited. Bob Hargreaves, who is slated to make the presentation, so noted.

X. CLOSED SESSION

Director John Benoit moved to closed session at 11:37 a.m.

The meeting reconvened from closed session at 12:16 p.m.

Director Benoit reported that the Board had elected to ask Phil Rosentrator to join as Interim Deputy Executive Director, and Bruce Wilcox as Interim Assistant Executive Director, at the Salton Sea Authority to bolster the Authority's managerial presence during this critical time.

Director Benoit moved that the Chair be authorized to make these appointments. Seconded by Matt Dessert. Motion unanimously carried.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Director Benoit, President, adjourned the meeting at 12:18 p.m.

NEXT MEETING TIME & LOCATION:

Thursday, May 21, 2015

10:00 a.m.

Imperial Irrigation District

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1285 Broadway Avenue

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Warrant Register
April 1, 2015 through April 30, 2015



Warrant Date	Warrant Number	Vendor Name	Amount
04/01/2015	15612	Best, Best & Krieger	3,340.60
04/01/2015	15613	Tetra Tech - 215	168,219.29
04/01/2015	15614	Perez, Juan Murillo	728.00
04/01/2015	15615	Sampson, GJ Acct	10,398.02
04/01/2015	15616	Schlange, J Andrew	6,950.00
04/01/2015	15617	Sampson, GJ Acct - 215	877.50
04/01/2015	15618	Schlange, J Andrew	300.00
04/01/2015	15619	Sampson, GJ Acct - 214	4,500.00
04/03/2015	EFT	FedEx	50.95
04/09/2015	EFT	Verizon California (inet)	113.35
04/16/2015	EFT	Rabobank Credit Card	1,460.62
04/20/2015	15620	Best, Best & Krieger	7,611.00
04/20/2015	15621	Perez, Juan Murillo	1,092.00
04/20/2015	15622	Riverside County (payroll transfer)	40,000.00
04/21/2015	EFT	Verizon Wireless	194.21
04/24/2015	EFT	Rabobank Credit Card	2,500.00
Total \$			248,335.54

6:19 AM

05/10/15

Accrual Basis

Salton Sea Authority
Balance Sheet by Fund
As of April 30, 2015

	101 General	214 Wetlands Grant	215 Funding Feasibility Review	702 Fish Clean Up Trust	TOTAL
ASSETS					
Current Assets					
Checking/Savings					
0001010 - Cash - Checking	77,659.69	-49,220.23	-23,111.00	0.00	5,328.46
0001011 - Cash - Money Market	197,813.45	47,569.19	0.00	20,991.43	266,374.07
0001012 - Cash - RivCo Fund	65,998.18	0.00	0.00	0.00	65,998.18
0001015 - Cash - Petty Cash	200.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	200.00
Total Checking/Savings	341,671.32	-1,651.04	-23,111.00	20,991.43	337,900.71
Accounts Receivable					
0001210 - Accounts Receivable	10,000.00	67,670.21	190,651.79	0.00	268,322.00
Total Accounts Receivable	10,000.00	67,670.21	190,651.79	0.00	268,322.00
Total Current Assets	351,671.32	66,019.17	167,540.79	20,991.43	606,222.71
TOTAL ASSETS	351,671.32	66,019.17	167,540.79	20,991.43	606,222.71
LIABILITIES & EQUITY					
Liabilities					
Current Liabilities					
Accounts Payable					
0002010 - Accounts Payable	41,075.17	100,834.44	177,362.55	0.00	319,272.16
Total Accounts Payable	41,075.17	100,834.44	177,362.55	0.00	319,272.16
Credit Cards					
0002015 - Credit Card Payable	437.53	0.00	0.00	0.00	437.53
Total Credit Cards	437.53	0.00	0.00	0.00	437.53
Total Current Liabilities	41,512.70	100,834.44	177,362.55	0.00	319,709.69
Total Liabilities	41,512.70	100,834.44	177,362.55	0.00	319,709.69
Equity					
0003009 - Fund Balance	113,043.14	-74,163.67	0.00	20,991.43	59,870.90
Net Income	197,115.48	39,348.40	-9,821.76	0.00	226,642.12
Total Equity	310,158.62	-34,815.27	-9,821.76	20,991.43	286,513.02
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	351,671.32	66,019.17	167,540.79	20,991.43	606,222.71

6:20 AM

05/10/15

Accrual Basis

Salton Sea Authority
Revenue & Expenditure by Fund
 July 2014 through April 2015

	101 General	214 Wetlands Grant	215 Funding Feasibility Review	TOTAL
Ordinary Income/Expense				
Income				
0004660 · State of California Grants	0.00	67,670.21	651,633.06	719,303.27
0004662 · Local Gov/Member Assessments	610,000.00	0.00	0.00	610,000.00
0004710 · Pooled Cash Allocated Interest	909.26	0.00	0.00	909.26
Total Income	610,909.26	67,670.21	651,633.06	1,330,212.53
Expense				
1020000 · SSA ADMINISTRATION				
1025010 · Salaries				
Salaries - GM	53,617.97	0.00	0.00	53,617.97
Salaries - Admin Support A	23,767.94	0.00	0.00	23,767.94
Total 1025010 · Salaries	77,385.91	0.00	0.00	77,385.91
1025500 · Employee Benefits	37,154.54	0.00	0.00	37,154.54
1026010 · Contract Svc/Attorney				
Contract Svcs/Attorney - Genera	28,874.47	0.00	0.00	28,874.47
Contract Svcs/Attorney - Legisl	4,045.40	0.00	0.00	4,045.40
Total 1026010 · Contract Svc/Attorney	32,919.87	0.00	0.00	32,919.87
1026050 · Contract Svc/Professional				
Contract Svc/Prof - Finance	47,267.00	0.00	0.00	47,267.00
Contract Svc/Prof - Adm Sup B	13,497.55	0.00	0.00	13,497.55
Contract Svc/Prof - Adm Sup C	9,000.00	0.00	0.00	9,000.00
Contract Svc/Prof - Adm Sup D	9,999.00	0.00	0.00	9,999.00
Total 1026050 · Contract Svc/Professional	79,763.55	0.00	0.00	79,763.55
1026060 · Contract Svcs/WRI,Archive Mgmt	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
1026090 · Contract Svc/Technical	56,212.50	0.00	0.00	56,212.50
1026093 · Contract Svcs/Tech Support				
Contract Svc/Tech Sup Other	19,950.00	0.00	0.00	19,950.00
Total 1026093 · Contract Svcs/Tech Support	19,950.00	0.00	0.00	19,950.00
1026095 · Contract Svc/Equipment Maint	4,281.25	0.00	0.00	4,281.25
1026096 · Contract Svc/Equipment Lease	262.47	0.00	0.00	262.47
1026120 · Insurance	9,621.22	0.00	0.00	9,621.22
1026350 · Communications	3,196.71	0.00	0.00	3,196.71
1026370 · Travel/Meetings	30,271.30	0.00	0.00	30,271.30
1026410 · Mileage Reimbursement	267.68	0.00	0.00	267.68
1026439 · Publications, Subscrip, Dues	3,600.22	0.00	0.00	3,600.22
1026450 · Postage, Mail	781.04	0.00	0.00	781.04
1026470 · Printing Services	3,321.93	0.00	0.00	3,321.93
1027030 · Office Exp/Operating Supplies	3,606.39	0.00	0.00	3,606.39
1027035 · Office Exp/Online Services	1,393.06	0.00	0.00	1,393.06
1028551 · Capital Equipment <\$5,000	6,566.04	0.00	0.00	6,566.04
Total 1020000 · SSA ADMINISTRATION	370,555.68	0.00	0.00	370,555.68

Salton Sea Authority
Revenue & Expenditure by Fund
 July 2014 through April 2015

	101 General	214 Wetlands Grant	215 Funding Feasibility Review	TOTAL
1030000 · COMMUNITY & PUBLIC OUTREACH				
1036010 · Attorney Services	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
1036054 · Government Relations	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total 1030000 · COMMUNITY & PUBLIC OUTREACH	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
6020000 · WETLANDS GRANT ADMINISTRATION				
6025010 · Salaries	17,016.60	0.00	0.00	17,016.60
6025500 · Employee Benefits	3,999.26	0.00	0.00	3,999.26
6026010 · Contract Svcs/Attorney	2,933.80	403.20	0.00	3,337.00
6026011 · Contract Svcs/J Schlange	656.25	-350.31	0.00	305.94
6026013 · Contract Svcs/Accountant	13,770.00	697.50	0.00	14,467.50
6026370 · Travel/Meetings	2,334.13	0.00	0.00	2,334.13
6026410 · Mileage Reimbursement	350.31	0.00	0.00	350.31
Total 6020000 · WETLANDS GRANT ADMINISTRATION	41,060.35	750.39	0.00	41,810.74
6040000 · WETLANDS GRANT TECHNICAL				
6046015 · Contract Svcs/AMEC - Permitting	0.00	971.50	0.00	971.50
6046040 · Contract Svcs/Design	966.59	26,959.68	0.00	27,926.27
6046060 · Contract Svcs/Amec - Environmen	359.76	-359.76	0.00	0.00
Total 6040000 · WETLANDS GRANT TECHNICAL	1,326.35	27,571.42	0.00	28,897.77
6050000 · FUNDING/FEASIBILITY ADMIN				
6055010 · Salaries				
Salaries - Admin Support 215	0.00	0.00	1,522.20	1,522.20
Salaries - GM 215	0.00	0.00	19,490.63	19,490.63
Total 6055010 · Salaries	0.00	0.00	21,012.83	21,012.83
6055500 · Employee Benefits	0.00	0.00	5,203.98	5,203.98
6056010 · Contract Svcs/Attorney	0.00	0.00	5,397.00	5,397.00
6056011 · Contract Svcs/J Schlange	0.00	0.00	5,056.25	5,056.25
6056013 · Contract Svcs/Accountant	0.00	0.00	5,197.50	5,197.50
Total 6050000 · FUNDING/FEASIBILITY ADMIN	0.00	0.00	41,867.56	41,867.56
6060000 · FUNDING/FEASIBILITY TECHNICAL				
6066016 · Contract Svcs/TetraTech \$1.7	0.00	0.00	619,587.26	619,587.26
Total 6060000 · FUNDING/FEASIBILITY TECHNICAL	0.00	0.00	619,587.26	619,587.26
6070000 · INFRASTRUCTURE FINANCE DISTRICT				
6076010 · Contract Services/Attorney	851.40	0.00	0.00	851.40
Total 6070000 · INFRASTRUCTURE FINANCE DISTRICT	851.40	0.00	0.00	851.40
Total Expense	413,793.78	28,321.81	661,454.82	1,103,570.41
Net Ordinary Income	197,115.48	39,348.40	-9,821.76	226,642.12
Net Income	197,115.48	39,348.40	-9,821.76	226,642.12

Commission Memorandum

To: Salton Sea Authority Board of Directors
From: Roger Shintaku, General Manager
Date: May 21, 2015
Re: **Fiscal Year 2014-2015 Administrative Budget Transfers for Board Approval**
Cm No: IV. D -- 5-21-15

General

During the mid-year review of FY 2014-2015 Salton Sea Authority Budget, the Salton Sea Authority staff anticipated various budget line items may need to be re-allocated prior to fiscal year-end. Submitted herein are Staff's recommended budget transfers.

Proposed Budget Transfers

(1) Professional Services

A) **Geotube Pre-Award Engineering - North Shore Yacht Club**

<u>Funding From</u>		<u>Funding To</u>	
Audit	\$ 2,000	Technical Support - Geotube	\$ 25,500
Technical Support - General Services	\$ 15,000	No. Shore Yacht Club	
Technical Support Planning	\$ 5,000	Pre-award Costs	
Legislative Government Relations	\$ 3,500		
	<u>\$ 25,500</u>		<u>\$ 25,500</u>

B) **Legal Support - anticipated services required in excess of budget**

<u>Funding From</u>		<u>Funding To</u>	
Legislative Government Relations	\$ 5,000	Contract Services/Legal	\$ 5,000
	<u>\$ 5,000</u>		<u>\$ 5,000</u>

C) **Technical Services - increased services required in excess of budget due to management transition**

<u>Funding From</u>		<u>Funding To</u>	
Technical Support Planning	\$ 8,000	Contract Svc/J Schlange	\$ 9,000
Legislative Government Relations	\$ 1,000		
	<u>\$ 9,000</u>		<u>\$ 9,000</u>

D) **Financial Support - increased services required due to activity level and reporting requirements**

<u>Funding From</u>		<u>Funding To</u>	
Admin Support - B	\$ 9,000	Contract Svc/Financial	\$ 9,000
	<u>\$ 9,000</u>		<u>\$ 9,000</u>

(2) General Office Expenses

A) **Travel Expenses/Meetings - re-allocation of travel costs budget**

<u>Funding From</u>		<u>Funding To</u>	
Mileage Reimbursement	\$ 10,000	Travel/Meetings	\$ 10,000
	<u>\$ 10,000</u>		<u>\$ 10,000</u>

(3) **Other Commitments**

A) **Office Move - costs to move and set-up office in new location**

<u>Funding From</u>		<u>Funding To</u>	
Miscellaneous Reserve	\$ 10,000	Office Move	\$ 10,000
	<u>\$ 10,000</u>		<u>\$ 10,000</u>

Recommendation

The Salton Sea Authority Staff recommends that the Salton Sea Authority Board of Directors accept the proposed transfers. The transfers are re-allocation only. There will be no increase to the overall budget.

Respectfully Submitted,

Roger Shintaku
General Manager

Salton Sea Authority Proposed Budget Transfers - May 21, 2015

		Mid-Year		Proposed			
	FY 2014/2015	Approved		May 21, 2015		Revised	
	Annual Budget	Transfers		Transfers		Budget	
						April 30, 2015	
						Budget Spent	
Revenue							
Riverside County	\$150,000.00					\$150,000.00	Paid
Imperial County	\$150,000.00					\$150,000.00	Paid
Coachella valley Water District	\$150,000.00					\$150,000.00	Paid
Imperial Irrigation Water District	\$150,000.00					\$150,000.00	Paid
Torres Martinez	\$15,000.00	(\$5,000.00)				\$10,000.00	Open
Finance & Funding Feasibility Review	\$100,000.00					\$100,000.00	\$0.00
Torres Martinez Wetlands (FAP)	\$45,000.00					\$45,000.00	\$0.00
Geo Tube	\$0.00					\$0.00	\$0.00
Carry over Funds - Prior Year Budget	\$20,000.00					\$60,000.00	\$0.00
Other	\$0.00					\$0.00	\$0.00
Reserve Contingencies Fund	\$0.00					\$0.00	\$0.00
Species Conservation Habitat	\$0.00					\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Revenue	\$780,000.00	(\$5,000.00)		\$0.00		\$815,000.00	\$0.00
Expense General Office Staff							
General Manager	\$125,000.00					\$125,000.00	\$88,465.34
Administrative Support - A	\$40,000.00					\$40,000.00	\$26,950.00
Fringe Benefits	\$70,000.00					\$70,000.00	\$46,357.78
Total Staff Support	\$235,000.00	\$0.00		\$0.00		\$235,000.00	\$161,773.12
General Office Expenses							
Computer Network Maintenance	\$15,000.00	(\$2,000.00)				\$13,000.00	\$4,281.00
Equipment Purchase	\$10,000.00	\$8,500.00				\$18,500.00	\$6,566.00
Equipment Lease	\$3,000.00	(\$1,500.00)				\$1,500.00	\$262.00
Insurance	\$15,000.00					\$15,000.00	\$9,621.00
Office Expense/Office Supplies	\$9,000.00	(\$5,000.00)				\$4,000.00	\$3,606.00
Office Expense/Online Services	\$1,000.00	\$2,000.00				\$3,000.00	\$1,393.00
Postage	\$1,000.00					\$1,000.00	\$781.00
Printing	\$7,000.00					\$7,000.00	\$3,322.00
Dues Subscriptions & Publications	\$3,000.00	\$2,000.00				\$5,000.00	\$3,600.00
Telephone & Internet	\$5,000.00					\$5,000.00	\$3,197.00
Travel/Mileage Reimbursement	\$25,000.00			(\$10,000.00)	2A	\$15,000.00	\$618.00
Travel, Conference Fees - Other	\$40,000.00			\$10,000.00	2A	\$50,000.00	\$32,605.00
Website Maintenance	\$10,000.00					\$10,000.00	\$0.00
Utilities	\$3,000.00					\$3,000.00	\$0.00

Staff Report

To: Salton Sea Authority Board
From: Phil Rosentrater, Deputy Director, Riverside County EDA
Date: May 21, 2015
Re: **Legislative Update**
CM No. V.C – 5-21-15

Staff from member agencies of the Salton Sea Authority (“SSA”) are coordinating a unified response to threats and opportunities in the legislative arena at both the state and federal levels.

SSA and its member agencies jointly engaged in the following activities to drive legislative and policy initiatives supported by the Salton Sea Authority Board of Directors:

Assembly Bill Summaries

AB 197 (Garcia) – Renewable Portfolio Standard

SSA Position: Watch

Status: Passed Asm Utilities, to Asm Natural Resources, to Asm Appropriations. 2nd read through and re-referred to Asm Appropriations, where it is set for a first hearing.

*Assemblyman Hadley (R-66) who is on both the committees of Utilities and Commerce, and Natural Resources has voted against AB 197, citing opposition.

AB 197 would require the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to adopt a process that includes "best-fit" basis along with total cost for rank ordering renewable energy bids to comply with the Renewable Portfolio Standard. Best fit refers to the selection of electric generation resources that produce electricity in a manner that fits with current and projected electrical load.

The bill would also require the CPUC and the governing board of a local publicly owned electric utility to consider greenhouse gas emissions when considering renewable energy bids to comply with the RPS.

The measures would not be mandated, only considered, if the bill passes. The SSA is advised to watch the bill because it is aligned with proposals (AB 645 – Williams) to

increase the RPS to 50%, a policy that is not supported by the current SSA Board of Directors.

AB 300 (Alejo) – Safe Water & Wildlife Protection Act: Harmful Algal Blooms

SSA Position: WATCH

Status: Amended, April 22 hearing set in Asm Appropriations

This bill would create an Algal Bloom Task Force under auspices of the State Water Resources Control Board for the purpose of reviewing risks and impacts of toxic algal blooms in state waters, and making recommendations for control measures. The recommendations would also include funding strategies, possibly from \$1.495 B in Prop 1 Water Bond funds intended for protecting health & natural wildlife habitat.

The proposed Task Force would be comprised of state agencies to include DWR, SWRCB, and Dept. of Public Health, and could potentially rely upon water quality standards involving TMDL's in order to enhance controls of toxic algal blooms

AB 1095 (Garcia) – Proposition 1 Appropriation: Salton Sea

SSA Position: SUPPORT if Amended

Status: April 28 hearing set in Asm Water, Parks & Wildlife. Amended and sent to Asm on Appropriations. 2nd read through and re-referred to Asm on Appropriations, where it is set for a first hearing.

*Assemblyman Harper (R-74) who is on the Committee on Water, Parks and Wildlife has voted against AB 1095, citing opposition. He, too, voted against AB 197.

AB 1095 is a spot bill set in place to secure an appropriation from Proposition 1 state water bond funding to fulfill state obligations related to the QSA. Although only a paragraph in length, the bill carries a critical omission of QSA Chapter 614 that the SSA successfully fought to insert into Prop 1 language last year.

The SSA appreciates the intent of AB 1095 to spur appropriation of state funding required to avert disaster at the Salton Sea, and to serve as a down payment on state contractual obligations related to the regional water transfer (QSA) brokered by the state.

The bill refers to funding mitigation activities related to the provisions that are set forth in Chapters 611, 612, and 613 of the QSA statutes enacted in 2003. Unfortunately, the current language of the spot bill inadvertently does not include Chapter 614 and its provisions that include *Restoration* activities.

Staff has requested, and the author is amendable to, amendment of the bill to re-instate language asserting the requirement for the state to honor the restoration provisions in existing law as specified in Chapter 614.

Assembly Bill Summaries

SB 317 (De Leon) - The Safe Neighborhood Parks, Rivers and Coastal Protection Bonds Act of 2016

SSA Position - Watch

Status: Sent to Asm on Natural Resources and Water, and Governance and Finance. Passed and hearing held for April 28. Re-referred to Asm on Natural Resources and Water, and Governance and Finance. Amended and sent to Asm on Appropriations. A first hearing is set for May 18.

*Assemblymembers Hertzberg (D-18) and Pavley (D-27) who are both on the Asm on Natural Resources and Water, and Governance and Finance have both voted in support of SB 317.

SB 317 would require the state of California, in accordance with Section 5880 to Division 5 of the Public Resources Code, would require financing and funding of parks, rivers and coastal protection in California. The state would be obligated to fund these projects immediately.

This bill would have some potential benefits for the Salton Sea because this bill would allow for the Salton Sea Authority to receive funding from the state for protection and restoration efforts. Section 2, Article 5, subsection 5883 of SB 317 implies that funds shall be made available to agencies who provide “protection and restoration of rivers, lakes, streams, etc., protect the fish and wildlife resources of the state, and provide access to these resources to the people of California.” As mentioned, the SSA would be included in this bill and benefit because this bill applies to the mission of the SSA and the work it currently does.

In addition, subsection 5883.8 explicitly states that fifty million dollars from this fund would be made available for the Salton Sea Restoration Fund for necessary spending, as long as they comply with said requirements.

The SSA should support this bill and continuously monitor it because of the benefits it could have for the SSA and Salton Sea restoration efforts. The bill goes along the line of saying that certain agencies are entitled to a large amount of funds for their efforts in protecting and maintaining rivers, lakes and streams in California. Since the SSA does work on ecosystem and habitat protection, shoreline and sea preservation, upon others, it complies with the requirements of subsection 5883 and should thus be allowed fifty million dollars from the fund.



STATEMENT OF ROGER SHINTAKU

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

SALTON SEA AUTHORITY

LITTLE HOOVER COMMISSION

APRIL 28, 2015

Thank you for inviting me to testify today about the Salton Sea Authority's role in the Salton Sea restoration process. I commend the Commission for taking an interest in this issue which is of paramount importance not only to the residents of the Imperial and Coachella Valleys, but to all the people of California. The Salton Sea can be either an ecological, health, and economic disaster for the region and the state, or a vital environmental resource. The outcome will likely depend on the decisions that are made by the participants in this hearing in the near future.

Below, I have briefly addressed the issues presented by the Commission's staff. I would be happy to elaborate on any issue during the hearing.

A. **Introductory overview of the problems at the Salton Sea and the events leading to the creation the Salton Sea Authority.**

The challenges faced by the Salton Sea are well described in the 2008 LAO report entitled "Restoring the Salton Sea", which has summarized those challenges as:

"In the coming decades, a transfer of Colorado River water from Imperial Valley to San Diego County will reduce the amount of agricultural runoff that currently flows into the Sea. Primarily due to this change in water use, the Sea will begin to dry up – impairing air quality, reducing available wildlife habitat, and increasing salinity of the remaining Sea, thereby killing off most of the aquatic life in the Sea."

Consequently, the shrinking Sea poses a major threat to public health in the surrounding region, and to the vitality of one of California's most important environmental resources. Additionally, the shrinking Sea will endanger economic development in vicinity of the Sea by impeding real estate development and recreational use.

The Salton Sea Authority was formed by local agencies in 1993 to seek collaborative solutions to the challenges posed by the dying Sea.

B. **The governance structure of the Salton Sea Authority.**

The Salton Sea Authority is a joint powers authority whose members include Imperial County, Riverside County, Imperial Irrigation District, Coachella Valley Water District and the Torrez

Martinez Band of Cahuilla Indians. The Authority meets monthly at alternate locations in the vicinity of the Sea.

C. ***The State of California's obligations to the Salton Sea and repercussions if the state does not meet those obligations.***

The State is contractually and statutorily obligated to mitigate the impacts of the QSA water transfers as identified in the State Water Resources Control Board order (WRO 2002-0013) that authorized the water transfers, to the extent those impacts exceed an initial contribution of \$133 million by the participating water districts. Failure of the State to fulfill that mitigation obligation would jeopardize the water transfers upon which Southern California water security relies.

In addition, a state default on obligations related to the water transfer affecting the Salton Sea could destabilize the integrity of existing water transfers all around the state, and effectively preclude voluntary water transfers that may be beneficial to all concerned in the future.

During the QSA negotiations, and in subsequent legislation, the State also committed itself to undertake the broader task of restoring the Salton Sea. (See 2008 LAO 2008 Report "The State of California has legal and contractual obligations to restore the Sea") The failure of the State to fulfill that obligation would be a breach of faith with the communities that have suffered the consequences of the water transfer, would imperil the health of the residents of the region, and would impair the economic and ecological vitality of the region, and throughout California.

D. ***Primary obstacles encountered by the Salton Sea Authority in its work to oversee restoration of the Salton Sea.***

The State of California took charge of restoration efforts by legislation enacted in 2003 and 2004. Since that time, the Salton Sea Authority has lacked the funding and regulatory and legislative authority sufficient to tackle the breadth of the challenges, which are regional, national and international in scope. Due to the State's inaction in fulfilling its restoration obligations, the Authority lobbied strenuously for, and in 2014 was finally granted, legislative authority to co-lead with the State a funding and feasibility review.

The State and Federal Governments retain ultimate authority over restoration activities. Restoration of the Salton Sea will cost billions of dollars. The Salton Sea Authority does not have the wherewithal to generate this magnitude of funding independent of state and/or federal contributions.

E. ***Details about the Salton Sea Authority's Financial Feasibility Action Plan.***

The goal of the Action Plan is to generate a toolbox of restoration components and funding alternatives which State and local policy makers can use to fashion a feasible and affordable restoration plan. Details and current status of the Action Plan are included in attachment A, prepared by the Tetra Tech, the Authority's contractor in preparing the Action Plan.

F. ***Any other information that would be useful to the Commission's analysis of the environmental mitigation and restoration of the Salton Sea.***

The 2008 LAO report provides a fairly comprehensive summary of the mitigation and restoration challenges. A more recent summary of the challenges faced in restoring the Sea, and the State's failure to adequately address those challenges, is provided in the "*Petition of Imperial Irrigation District for Modification of Revised Water Rights Order 2002-0013*", filed in November 2014. A comprehensive assessment of potential damages of failure to restore the Sea was recently presented by the Pacific Institute in *Hazard's Toll: The Costs of Inaction at the Salton Sea* (Sept. 2014)

To summarize those reports, the Salton Sea is an inter-continentially important stop over on the Pacific Flyway. Failure to adequately restore the Sea will irreparably impair that ecological treasure. Hundreds of thousands of residents in the vicinity of the Sea are imperiled by potential dust emissions from exposed playa. And the vitality of the economies of the Imperial and Coachella Valley are inextricably tied to the vitality of the Sea that their communities surround.

Thank you for inviting me to testify today. I look forward to working with you and other hearing participants to bring greater clarity to the issues presented by the restoration of the Salton Sea and to work collaboratively to achieve the full potential of a restored Sea.

Commission Memorandum

To: Salton Sea Authority Board of Directors
From: Roger Shintaku, General Manager
Date: May 21, 2015
Re: **Approval of Authorized Signatory and Resolution No. 15-03**
CM No. VIA – 5-21-15

BACKGROUND:

At the April 23, 2015 Board meeting, the Salton Sea Authority (“Authority”) Board of Directors added Phil Rosentrater to the staff as Interim Deputy Executive Director. In the course of performing his duties, Mr. Rosentrater will be required to sign checks and handle various matters with Salton Sea Authority’s bank on behalf of the Authority.

Attached please find proposed Salton Sea Authority Resolution 15-03, entitled, “Resolution of the Board of Directors of the Salton Sea Authority Designating Officials Authorized to Sign Warrants and Checks, Transfer Funds, and Access Safe Deposit Box,” for your consideration, which anticipates that the Board would approve Mr. Phil Rosentrater as an authorized signatory.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Salton Sea Authority Staff recommends that the Salton Sea Authority Board approve Mr. Phil Rosentrater as an authorized signatory for signing checks for the Authority, and approve proposed Resolution No. 15-03, entitled, “Resolution of the Board of Directors of the Salton Sea Authority Designating Officials Authorized to Sign Warrants and Checks, Transfer Funds, and Access Safe Deposit Box.”

Respectfully submitted,

Roger Shintaku
General Manager



**SALTON SEA AUTHORITY
RESOLUTION NO. 15-03**

**RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF
THE SALTON SEA AUTHORITY DESIGNATING OFFICIALS
AUTHORIZED TO SIGN WARRANTS AND CHECKS,
TRANSFER FUNDS, AND ACCESS SAFE DEPOSIT BOX**

BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Directors of the Salton Sea Authority (Authority), assembled in regular meeting this 21st day of May, 2015, that the Rabobank is instructed to honor Authority warrants or checks written on accounts in the name of the Salton Sea Authority executed by any two of the following designated officials: John J. Benoit, President; G. Patrick O'Dowd, Treasurer; Roger Shintaku, General Manager; and Phil Rosentrater, Interim Deputy Executive Director; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Rabobank is instructed to honor any transfer of funds by means of written instructions by order of any two designated officials: John J. Benoit, President; G. Patrick O'Dowd, Treasurer; Roger Shintaku, General Manager; and Phil Rosentrater, Interim Deputy Executive Director; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all warrants and checks, and instructions to transfer funds will require at least one original signature of those persons herein defined whose signatures appear at the foot of this resolution; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the second signature for warrants and checks, and instructions to transfer funds may be an original signature or a facsimile signature (stamp) appearing at the foot of this resolution; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Rabobank is instructed to honor access to safe deposit box(es) executed by any two of the following designated officials: John J. Benoit, President; G. Patrick O'Dowd, Treasurer; Roger Shintaku, General Manager; and Phil Rosentrater, Interim Deputy Executive Director, whose signatures appear at the foot of this resolution; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that prior authorizations to sign warrants and checks, transfer funds and access safe deposit box(es) are hereby rescinded; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Secretary is hereby directed to furnish a certified copy of this resolution to Rabobank.

John J. Benoit
President

G. Patrick O'Dowd
Treasurer

Roger A. Shintaku
General Manager

Phil Rosentrater
Interim Deputy Executive Director

STATE OF CALIFORNIA)
SALTON SEA AUTHORITY) ss.
OFFICE OF SECRETARY)

I, MATTHEW DESSERT, Secretary of the Salton Sea Authority, a Joint Powers Agency of the State of California, DO HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of Resolution No. 15-03 adopted by the Board of Directors of said Salton Sea Authority at a special meeting thereof duly held and convened on the 21st day of May, 2015, at which meeting a quorum of said Board was present and acting throughout.

Dated this 21st day of May, 2015

Matthew Dessert
Secretary of the Salton Sea Authority
and of the Board of Directors thereof

Commission Memorandum

To: Salton Sea Authority Board
From: Roger Shintaku, General Manager and Ad Hoc Finance Committee
Date: May 21, 2015
Re: **Approval of the Salton Sea Authority Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2015-2016**
CM No. VII.A.1 – 5-21-15

BACKGROUND:

At the March 26, 2015 Board meeting, the Salton Sea Authority Staff submitted the Salton Sea Authority proposed budget for the general agency to the Board of Directors for their consideration, comment and/or approval.

The budget was referred to the newly-formed Ad Hoc Finance Committee, consisting of Directors O’Dowd, Kelley, and Ashley. Ad Hoc Finance Committee Chairman O’Dowd met with Staff and, subsequently, Chairman O’Dowd had further review and consultations concerning the newly formed committee and the budget with Director Ashley and Director Kelley.

RECOMMENDATION:

Based on the review and modifications of the Salton Sea Authority Staff and the Salton Sea Authority Ad Hoc Finance Committee Chairman, G. Patrick O’Dowd (in consultation with Ad Hoc Finance Committee Members Ashley and Kelley), Staff was directed by the committee to forward the proposed Salton Sea Authority budget to the full Salton Sea Authority Board for review, comment, guidance, direction, consideration and approval as appropriate, and to authorize Staff to forward the budget to the Authority members.

A final Salton Sea Authority Budget, as presented or as revised, is recommended for approval at this time in order to allow member agencies sufficient time to secure approvals prior to implementation on July 1, 2015, the beginning of the Salton Sea Authority fiscal year.

Respectfully,

Roger S. Shintaku
General Manager

Salton Sea Authority Proposed Budget - FY 2015-2016

	FY 2014/2015	Revised		Jan. 15, 2015	Proposed 2015/2016
	Annual Budget	Budget		Budget Spent	Annual Budget
Revenue					
Riverside County	\$150,000.00	\$150,000.00		Paid	\$174,500.00
Imperial County	\$150,000.00	\$150,000.00		Paid	\$174,500.00
Coachella valley Water District	\$150,000.00	\$150,000.00		Paid	\$174,500.00
Imperial Irrigation Water District	\$150,000.00	\$150,000.00		Paid	\$174,500.00
Torres Martinez	\$15,000.00	\$10,000.00		Open	\$15,000.00
Finance & Funding Feasibility Review	\$100,000.00	\$100,000.00		\$0.00	\$100,000.00
Torres Martinez Wetlands (FAP)	\$45,000.00	\$45,000.00		\$0.00	\$28,000.00
Geo Tube	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$0.00	\$110,000.00
Carry over Funds - Prior Year Budget	\$20,000.00	\$60,000.00		\$0.00	\$45,500.00
Other	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$0.00	\$2,000.00
Reserve Contingencies Fund	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$0.00	\$0.00
Species Conservation Habitat	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$0.00	\$40,000.00
Total Revenue	\$780,000.00	\$815,000.00		\$0.00	\$1,038,500.00
Expense General Office Staff					
General Manager	\$125,000.00	\$125,000.00		\$64,690.00	\$175,000.00
Administrative Support - A	\$40,000.00	\$40,000.00		\$21,076.00	\$40,000.00
Fringe Benefits	\$70,000.00	\$70,000.00		\$30,973.00	\$92,000.00
Total Staff Support	\$235,000.00	\$235,000.00		\$116,739.00	\$307,000.00
General Office Expenses					
Computer Network Maintenance	\$15,000.00	\$13,000.00		\$4,163.00	\$13,000.00
Equipment Purchase	\$10,000.00	\$18,500.00		\$6,566.00	\$10,000.00
Equipment Lease	\$3,000.00	\$1,500.00		\$175.00	\$1,500.00
Insurance	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00		\$9,621.00	\$14,000.00
Office Expense/Office Supplies	\$9,000.00	\$4,000.00		\$966.00	\$5,000.00
Office Expense/Online Services	\$1,000.00	\$3,000.00		\$1,394.00	\$4,000.00
Postage	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00		\$440.00	\$1,000.00
Printing	\$7,000.00	\$7,000.00		\$3,213.00	\$6,000.00
Dues Subscriptions & Publications	\$3,000.00	\$5,000.00		\$3,393.00	\$5,000.00
Telephone & Internet	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00		\$1,706.00	\$5,000.00
Travel/Mileage Reimbursement	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00		\$155.00	\$20,000.00
Travel, Conference Fees - Other	\$40,000.00	\$40,000.00		\$9,521.00	\$35,000.00
Website Maintenance	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00		\$0.00	\$6,000.00
Utilities	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00		\$0.00	\$3,000.00
Misc. Reserve	\$20,000.00	\$1,000.00		\$0.00	\$20,000.00
Total Office Expense	\$167,000.00	\$152,000.00		\$41,313.00	\$148,500.00

Salton Sea Authority Proposed Budget - FY 2015-2016

	FY 2014/2015	Revised		Jan. 15, 2015	Proposed 2015/2016
	Annual Budget	Budget		Budget Spent	Annual Budget
Professional Services					
Administrative Support - B	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00		\$6,013.00	\$50,000.00
Administrative Support - C	\$0.00	\$18,000.00		\$0.00	\$40,000.00
Administrative Support - D	\$0.00	\$10,000.00		\$9,999.00	\$12,000.00
Audit	\$15,000.00	\$13,000.00		\$0.00	\$13,000.00
Financial Support	\$42,000.00	\$70,000.00		\$35,470.00	\$100,000.00
Legal	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00		\$26,992.00	\$50,000.00
Tetra Tech Support	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00		\$967.00	\$20,000.00
Tech Support J. Andrew Schlange	\$60,000.00	\$60,000.00		\$34,925.00	\$60,000.00
Tech Support Planning	\$25,000.00	\$13,000.00		\$0.00	\$25,000.00
Tech Support Other	\$50,000.00	\$22,000.00		\$0.00	\$50,000.00
Legislative Government Relations	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00		\$0.00	\$15,000.00
Total Professional Services	\$327,000.00	\$341,000.00		\$114,366.00	\$435,000.00
Other Commitments					
Water Resource Institute	\$0.00	\$22,000.00		\$0.00	\$28,000.00
Office Space	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$0.00	\$30,000.00
Infrastructure Finance District	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$0.00	\$40,000.00
Reserve a)	\$51,000.00	\$25,000.00		\$0.00	\$50,000.00
b)					
Total Other Commitments	\$51,000.00	\$47,000.00		\$0.00	\$148,000.00
Total Expenditures	\$780,000.00	\$775,000.00		\$272,418.00	\$1,038,500.00

Little Hoover Commission tours Salton Sea

[Jesse Marx, The Desert Sun](#) 10:24 p.m. PDT April 27, 2015



Patrick O'Dowd of the Salton Sea Authority looks at one of the mudpots at the Salton Sea's south end on Monday. In the distance is a geothermal power plant.
(Photo: Jay Calderon/The Desert Sun)

Chris Schoneman pointed to the ground outside the bus, baked by the sun and strewn with dried weeds, branches and bits of plywood. Things looked a lot different in 2005.

“The water used to be right here,” he said, “lapping at the edge of the road.”

Now the shoreline begins a mile in the distance and is barely visible through the heat haze on the horizon. The exposed lakebed, which will only grow over the next couple years, represents an environmental disaster in slow motion with the potential to hurl dust across Southern California and kill wildlife.

Locals already know this. Bureaucrats in Sacramento, not so much.

As head of the nearby national wildlife refuge, Schoneman was speaking Monday not just to fellow researchers and water experts, but to the representatives of local politicians and, most importantly, the Little Hoover Commission. As an independent oversight agency, the

commission investigates state government operations and makes recommendations for improvement through the Legislature.

This week, the commission is turning its sights on the Salton Sea. It began with a seven-hour tour and the showing of a documentary titled “Breaking Point,” which surveyed the 100-plus history of the California’s largest lake — from its accidental creation to its height in the mid-20th century as a chic rendezvous for movie stars and high-speed boat racers.

By the 1990s, however, as floods and fluctuating shorelines became the norm, massive quantities of fish and birds began dying. Fears of agricultural dumping and pesticide ran rampant and further ruined the sea’s image.

For decades, the sea had been sustained with water from the Colorado River, but that source is about to run dry. In 2003, multiple agencies in the region signed an agreement that would steadily send water from the river to urban areas. As 2017 ends, so does the inflow to the sea.

Today, the exposed lakebed is a serious environmental concern. The area already suffers from abnormally high rates of asthma. Yet most Californians have never heard of the sea. Even when presented with maps, the bystanders depicted in the “Breaking Point” documentary had no idea what the sea is.

Confused when she heard the words “Salton Sea,” one woman responded, “Salt Lake City?”

Many, many desert dwellers have been sounding the alarm, but Sacramento has sat mostly on its hands, preferring to give speeches and study the issue to death.

“We don’t want to be just another study,” said Carole D’Elia, executive director of the Little Hoover Commission, “but rather the catalyst to make change happen.”

The commission is made up of four members of the Legislature — two Democrats and two Republicans — and nine public appointees. One of those is Jack Flanigan, a lawyer from Sacramento who’s lived in Palm Desert for nine years and who’s been asking his colleagues to look at the Salton Sea for more than two years.

“It’s a pretty tough sell,” Flanigan said. But he also figures the drought will attract rather than deflect attention to the sea. The two are now part of the same problem.

There’s a saying in Sacramento, he added, “that solutions to intractable problems only come together when there’s finally a crisis.”

Then in February, the commission received a letter from Assemblyman Eduardo Garcia, who asked for an “unbiased” review of the sea’s potential solutions, and it jumped.

To begin, the commission looked at the \$9 billion price tag that the state had previously attached to restoration. Then they looked at the relevant research and were startled by another cost. In 2014, the Pacific Institute, an Oakland-based think tank, [estimated](#) that worsening air quality, the

loss of valuable ecological habitat, diminished recreational revenue and property devaluation could total \$70 billion over the next 30 years.

“Though the costs of any significant action at the sea are likely to be high, I fear the costs of inaction will undoubtedly be higher,” [wrote Garcia](#), a Coachella Democrat.

The commission is holding a hearing on Tuesday morning at the University of California-Riverside campus auditorium, where locals, water experts and government representatives will speak more about the impending ecological and environmental disaster. A second hearing is scheduled June 25.

All of which is intended to give the commission a serious understanding of the problems and begin the gears turning on possible solutions — likely in the form of smaller projects.

Among the stops on Monday’s tour, which was organized by the Salton Sea Authority, was a geothermal plant on the sea’s southern edge, owned and operated by CalEnergy. This one and a dozen like it provide energy for the region and demonstrate the role that private industry might play on the shores of the sea.

Nobody doubts that the sea is going to end up being smaller in the end. It’s now a question of managing expectations. But there is an opportunity here to mitigate the disaster while establishing new industries that are dedicated to renewable energy sources.

Geothermal is just one option. Other possibilities include lithium mining; solar panels could be laid over the exposed lakebed; and ponds could be constructed in the production of algae oil, a type of fuel.

Bruce Wilcox, the environmental manager for the Imperial Irrigation District, said his agency and the county are working on a plan of their own, which might incorporate some of these ideas.

If done right, we wouldn’t just save the sea, he said. “We’d create new revenue streams.”

Jesse Marx is The Desert Sun’s political reporter. Reach him at (760) 778-4620, jesse.marx@desertsun.com or [@marxjesse](https://twitter.com/marxjesse) on Twitter.

Article located at <http://www.desertsun.com/story/news/environment/2015/04/28/salton-sea-little-hoover-commission/26490957/>